

REMARKS

Claims 1-38 will be pending upon entry of the present amendment. Claims 1-27 were allowed. Claims 29-38 are new. No new matter is being presented.

New claim 33 depends on allowed claim 27, and thus, is also in condition for allowance.

New independent claim 34, like allowed claim 1, is directed to an address decoder that includes "a subgroup decoder delivering subgroup selection signals for selecting a subgroup of word lines from a plurality of subgroups of word lines, each subgroup of word lines comprising a set of word lines belonging to different groups of word lines." As indicated by the Examiner on pages 3-4 of the office action, the prior art does not show such a subgroup decoder. Accordingly, claim 34 is in condition for allowance. New claims 35-38 depend on claim 34, and thus, are also in condition for allowance.

Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,741,515 to Lazar et al. ("Lazar").

Claim 28 is not anticipated by Lazar. Claim 28 recites a method that includes:

delivering group selection signals of variable polarity for selecting
a group of word lines from a plurality of groups of word lines;

delivering subgroup selection signals of variable polarity for
selecting a subgroup of word lines from a plurality of subgroups of word lines,
one of the subgroups of word lines comprising a set of word lines belonging to
different groups of word lines; and

multiplexing the group and subgroup selection signals to select and
selectively apply one of these signals to one of the word lines.

Lazar does not disclose any of the above-quoted steps of claim 28. First, Lazar does not deliver any signals of variable polarity. Instead, Lazar is designed to supply conventional word line selection signals having only one polarity: positive. Lazar does not state that the selection signals could be positive and negative, and there is no reason to believe that such variable polarity selection signal could or should be used in Lazar. The Examiner indicates that item 250 of Lazar delivers variable polarity signals, but that is not correct because item 250

is merely an address bus, and there is not suggestion that any addresses could or would be conveyed using any negative signals.

Second, Lazar does not deliver any group selection signals for selecting a group of word lines. Instead, as is conventional, Lazar delivers on address line 250 an address that is intended to select one word line 240 only. Lazar states, “*Individual* rows of the DRAM array 202 are selected with a corresponding word line signal that is provided on *one* of a plurality of word lines that are provided on a word line bus 240 from the decoder/word line driver circuit 232 (col. 12, lines 21-26).” Thus, each word line signal of Lazar selects only one word line, rather than a group of word lines.

Third, Lazar does not disclose delivering subgroup selection signals “for selecting a subgroup of word lines from a plurality of subgroups of word lines, one of the subgroups of word lines comprising a set of word lines belonging to different groups of word lines.” As noted above, each selection signal of Lazar selects a single word line word only – not a subgroup of word lines. Moreover, by only selecting a single word line, Lazar cannot suggest that one of the subgroups includes a set of word lines belonging to different ones of the groups of word lines. The Examiner points out that the word line bus 240 includes a plurality of sub-word lines. That may be true, but none of such sub-word lines are selected with a subgroup selection signal and none includes a set of word lines belonging to different ones of the groups of word lines.

Fourth, Lazar does not disclose multiplexing group and subgroup selection signals. Lazar shows two multiplexers 234 and 278, but those multiplexers select either an external address or a refresh address, neither of which are group or subgroup selection signals. Even if one accepted the Examiner’s view that the word line bus 240 includes a plurality of sub-word lines, those word lines and sub-word lines are not multiplexed by either of the multiplexers 234, 278.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 28 is in condition for allowance. New claims 29-32 depend on claim 28, and thus, are also in condition for allowance. In addition, each of claims 29-32 recites additional elements that are not disclosed in Lazar.

The Director is authorized to charge any additional fees due by way of this Amendment, or credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 19-1090.

Application No. 10/760,631
Reply to Office Action dated July 25, 2005

All of the claims remaining in the application are now clearly allowable.
Favorable consideration and a Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

SEED Intellectual Property Law Group PLLC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Iannucci', is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Iannucci
Registration No. 33,514

Enclosure:
Postcard

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 6300
Seattle, Washington 98104-7092
Phone: (206) 622-4900
Fax: (206) 682-6031

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